

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

To you I call; for you will surely heed me,
O God;
turn your ear to me; hear my words.
Guard me as the apple of your eye;
in the shadow of your wings protect me.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

Almighty ever-living God,
grant that we may always conform our will
to yours
and serve your majesty in sincerity of heart.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING Exodus 17:8-13

A reading from the book of Exodus.

The Amalekites came and attacked Israel at Rephidim. Moses said to Joshua, "Pick out men for yourself, and tomorrow morning march out to engage Amalek. I, meanwhile, will stand on the hilltop, the staff of God in my hand." Joshua did as Moses told him and marched out to engage Amalek, while Moses and Aaron and Hur went up to the top of the hill. As long as Moses kept his arms raised, Israel had the advantage; when he let his arms fall, the advantage went to Amalek. But Moses' arms grew heavy, so they took a stone and put it under him and on this he sat, Aaron and Hur supporting his arms, one on one side, one on the other; and his arms remained firm till sunset. With the edge of the sword Joshua cut down Amalek and his people.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM Psalm 120

Response:

**Our help is in the name of the Lord
who made heaven and earth.**

1. I lift up my eyes to the mountains:
from where shall come my help?
My help shall come from the Lord
who made heaven and earth. (R.)

2. May he never allow you to stumble!
Let him sleep not, your guard.
No, he sleeps not nor slumbers,
Israel's guard. (R.)
3. The Lord is your guard and your shade;
at your right hand he stands.
By day the sun shall not smite you
nor the moon in the night. (R.)
4. The Lord will guard you from evil,
he will guard your soul.
The Lord will guard your going and
coming
both now and for ever. (R.)

SECOND READING 2 Timothy 3:14-4:2

A reading from the second letter of St Paul to Timothy.

You must keep to what you have been taught and know to be true; remember who your teachers were, and how, ever since you were a child, you have known the holy scriptures – from these you can learn the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is inspired by God and can profitably be used for teaching, for refuting error, for guiding people's lives and teaching them to be holy. This is how the man who is dedicated to God becomes fully equipped and ready for any good work.

Before God and before Christ Jesus who is to be judge of the living and the dead, I put this duty to you, in the name of his Appearing and of his kingdom: proclaim the message and, welcome or unwelcome, insist on it. Refute falsehood, correct error, call to obedience – but do all with patience and with the intention of teaching.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ
enlighten the eyes of our mind,
so that we can see what hope his call holds
for us.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL Luke 18:1-8

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

Jesus told his disciples a parable about the need to pray continually and never lose heart. "There was a judge in a certain town" he said "who had neither fear of God nor respect for man. In the same town there was a widow who kept on coming to him and saying, 'I want justice from you against my enemy!' For a long time he refused, but at last he said to himself, 'Maybe I have neither fear of God nor respect for man, but since she keeps pestering me I must give this widow her just rights, or she will persist in coming and worry me to death.'"

And the Lord said, "You notice what the unjust judge has to say? Now will not God see justice done to his chosen who cry to him day and night even when he delays to help them? I promise you, he will see justice done to them, and done speedily. But when the Son of Man comes, will he find any faith on earth?"

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with
the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the
Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the
dead
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.

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PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Grant us, Lord, we pray,
a sincere respect for your gifts,
that, through the purifying action of your
grace,
we may be cleansed by the very mysteries we
serve.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Behold, the eyes of the Lord
are on those who fear him,
who hope in his merciful love,
to rescue their souls from death,
to keep them alive in famine.

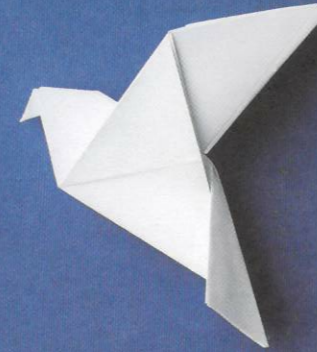
PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Grant, O Lord, we pray,
that, benefiting from participation in heavenly
things,
we may be helped by what you give in this
present age
and prepared for the gifts that are eternal.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

THE WORD

NEVER GIVE UP

LUKE 18:1-8



The opening line of today's Gospel makes it clear that this parable is about persevering in prayer. The parable involves a conflict between two stock characters.

The widow stands for the most vulnerable kind of people in Israelite society. With no husband to ensure their rights, widows were at the mercy of others, including even male family members. We don't know what this woman's case is, except that she wants justice against her enemies. The rather self-important judge, who neither fears God nor listens to public opinion, isn't going to allow a defenceless woman like her to get the better of him. At least, that's what he thinks. For a time, he ignores all her demands for justice.

At this point, Jesus includes some humour that gets lost in most of our translations. As is often the case in his parables, Luke lets us into a character's inner world. Here he shows us the judge's innermost thoughts. Unbending though he may be, he realises he will have to yield to this defenceless woman. Why? Our translations usually say something like "because she will persist in coming and worry me to death". The original word in the parable can be translated as something close to "she will slap me in the face" or even "she will give me an uppercut". The judge fears that this powerless woman's exasperation will know no bounds, and her persistence will finally spill over into violence. So a judge who doesn't fear God or care about public opinion is brought to his knees by the most defenceless of women, a poor widow!

Jesus applies the parable to how God deals with persistent prayer. God will reply to those who cry day and night, even though it may look as if their prayer is unanswered. The riddle of unanswered prayer is one of the great tests of faith and something the Bible does not ignore. When the Israelites cry out under the burdens of slavery, God "hears" but does not immediately answer. The book of Job is built around the problem of a good man who suddenly loses everything he has, to whom God seems deaf until God and Job finally become locked in a dramatic argument.

In the last line of today's Gospel, something of a reversal takes place. The main character of the parable was an earthly judge and not a very good one at that. Another judge is coming, the Son of Man, who will be even more searching than the most stringent earthly judge. ■

REFLECT

The Gurkhas couldn't believe their luck. For years Nepalese veterans who served in the British army before 1997 had been campaigning for the right to settle in the UK but without success. And then the actress Joanna Lumley took up their cause. Her father had served with the Gurkhas, and she felt they were being treated unjustly. She began a campaign on their behalf, which attracted huge publicity and put tremendous

pressure on the authorities. In the end, the British government had to give in. Ministers were afraid the actress would give them a metaphorical black eye!

There are many Joanna Lumleys throughout our world today, women and men who work for justice. For more than thirty years, widows and mothers have marched in Buenos Aires seeking to discover the fate of sons and husbands who disappeared during the military rule of the 1980s. Closer to home, there are the

SAY

Lord, help me to never
lose heart. Help me to
trust in you always.
Amen.

PRAY

Ask God to help you keep on praying and trusting in God, even when God seems deaf to your prayer.

DO

Look at our society and world. What injustices exist that need to be addressed? Join or donate to a group that works for justice and peace.

**LEARN**

The Christian knows the importance of prayer.

Prayer and justice go hand in hand. If we are people who pray, then our prayer will compel us to be concerned for justice and to work for it.

Action for justice is a constitutive part of preaching the Gospel.

women like Marie Collins who suffered sexual abuse and persisted until their voices were heard.

To follow Jesus means to work for justice. Indeed, the Church teaches that action for justice is a constitutive part of preaching the Gospel. It is not enough for us to tell people who are poor, abused, unjustly treated that "we will pray for them". We must also do what we can to address the injustice. And, like the persistent widow, we mustn't give up. ■